REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Claims 27-31 are added in this RCE Reply. Therefore, claims 1-31 are pending. Claims 1, 9, and 15 are independent.

INTERVIEW

Applicants thank the Examiner for conducting an interview with Applicants' representative on February 23, 2006.

§ 103 REJECTION – HOFRICHTER, AIZU

Claims 1-26 stand rejection under 35 USC §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hofrichter (WO 02/37217 A2) in view of Aizu (US Patent 6,839,978). Applicants respectfully traverse.

First, Applicant maintains all traversal arguments made in the previous Replies.

Independent claim 1 recites, in part "a microprocessor operatively connected to the at least one slave device for repeatedly sending a status request signal to the at least one slave device and receiving one or more response signals from the at least one slave device" and "wherein the operation

status data includes data related to specific functions performed by the at least one slave device."

It is clear that the combination of Hofrichter cannot teach or suggest the above-recited features. Contrary to the Examiner's allegation, Aizu merely teaches sending requests to monitor electricity consumption of devices. There is no teaching or suggestion in Aizu operation data related to the specific functions performed by the slave devices as recited. For this reason alone, claim 1 is distinguishable over the combination of Hofrichter and Aizu.

Claim 1 also recites "wherein the microprocessor extracts data from the operation history database when a history inquiry request is received from a user." The Examiner specifically relies on column 19, lines 63-67 to allegedly teach this feature. Contrary to the Examiner's allegation, Aizu merely reveals that a log of user initiated operations are recorded and the log is automatically transferred to a server.

Aizu indicates that a data recording unit 12c of the display terminal 25 records information that represents a history of operations received from the user through the screen display unit 8. *See Aizu, Figure 30; column 19, lines 35-41.* The operation history information is recorded in a file referred to as "File 3". *See Aizu, Figure 30; column 19, lines 41-43.* The display terminal operation history transmission unit 27 of the display terminal 25 reads out the information in the File 3 and transmits the information to the controller 24.

See Aizu, Figure 30; column 19, lines 44-53. This information is transferred to the center server 28. *See Aizu, Figure 30; column 19, lines 54-62.* The display terminal operation history reception unit 29 of the center server 28 extracts the information and acquires the user's operation situation. *See Aizu, Figure 30; column 19, lines 63-67.* In other words, the log of user initiated operations are recorded and the log is transferred to the center server automatically.

This is in complete contrast with the recited feature. The recited feature requires that extraction of operations status data of the slave device be extracted based on an inquiry from the user. In contrast, Aizu teaches, at best, logging a history of user initiated operations and transferring the log automatically to a center server. Clearly, Aizu cannot teach or suggest the above-recited feature. This is also sufficient to distinguish claim 1 from Hofrichter and Aizu.

In addition, modifying Hofrichter with Aizu renders Hofrichter unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. Hofrichter is directed toward a system and method for downloading multimedia (video and audio streams) content and applications for a home network. *See Hofrichter, page 1, lines 12-14.* The applications and multimedia are intended for consumer electronic devices that process audio/visual data including digital televisions, personal computers, audio devices, personal video recorders, digital video recorders, game devices and the like. *See Hofrichter, page 1, lines 16-22.*

For a network that includes these types of devices, it is required that the network has sufficient bandwidth capacity to deliver the audio and visual data to the devices. Hofrichter specifically teaches two examples of high speed networks – one that adheres to the HAVi (Home Audio Video interoperability) standard which operates at speeds upwards of 400 Mbps and one that adheres to the USB (universal serial bus) standard which operates at speeds upwards of 12 Mbps. *See Hofrichter, page 5, line 29 – page 6, line 4.* Hofrichter states that any connection providing "adequate quality of service for commands and streams of digital AV content" may be implemented. In other words, Hofrichter requires the network bandwidth to be sufficient to handle multimedia (video, audio) data streams.

In contrast, Aizu specifically indicates that PLC (power line communication) is used for the network. *See Aizu, Figure 1; column 5, lines 38-43.* It is clear that Aizu is directed gathering data on entirely different types of devices. As an example, Aizu is merely concerned with gathering the amount of electric power consumed by home appliances such as a refrigerator, air conditioner, hot water heater and the like. *See Aizu, Figure 1.* As illustrated in Figure 2, all devices of the network – the controller 1, the display terminal 2 and the appliance 3 – each include an electric power line communication unit 7, 14, 16.

For a §103 to be proper, one of the requirements is that the cited reference must be considered in its entirety. *See M.P.E.P. 2141.02.* Thus, the teachings of Aizu must be considered in its entirety. When considered in its entirety, modifying Hofrichter with Aizu would leave Hofrichter operating on the PLC based network, which is clearly insufficient for handling multimedia data stream required by Hofrichter, and therefore, renders Hofrichter unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. Then, by definition, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine Hofrichter and Aizu, and thus the combination of Hofrichter and Aizu is improper. *See M.P.E.P. 2143.01.*

At the interview, the Examiner responded that claim 1 does not specifically recite which communication standard is being utilized. This is irrelevant in determining whether or not the combination of the references are proper. As demonstrated above, when the teachings of the references are taken in their entirety as required in MPEP, the combination of Hofrichter and Aizu is improper.

Also, it is noted that claim 8 specifically recites that the PLC modems are used.

Yet further, the Examiner alleges that Hofrichter discloses a system that reads logs files to determine the history of use in a home network. *See Final Office Action, Response to Arguments, page 3, lines 20-22.* The Examiner recognizes that Hofrichter cannot teach or suggest specifying how the log files

of the history of use of the devices are generated. *See Final Office Action, Response to Arguments, page 4, lines 7-8.* The Examiner attempts to cure this deficiency of Hofrichter by alleging that Aizu discloses a display terminal device that collects a predetermined data – amount of electric power consumed by an appliance – at regular intervals. *See Final Office Action, Response to Arguments, page 4, lines 9-18.*

However, it is noted that the log files as disclosed in Hofrichter and the predetermined data collection as disclosed in Aizu are incompatible. Hofrichter discloses that the log files contain information regarding applications and media contents previously used in the home network system. *See Hofrichter, page 12, lines 23-25.* In contrast, Aizu merely collects information regarding amount of electric power consumed by an appliance – such as air conditioner, refrigerator, hot water supply device and the like (*see Figure 1 of Aizu*). In other words, the types of data collected by Hofrichter and Aizu are completely different. This is more evidence that Hofrichter and Aizu cannot be combined contrary to the Examiner's suggestion. For at least the reasons stated above, independent claim 1 is distinguishable over the combination of Hofrichter and Aizu.

Independent claim 9 recites, in part "A television (TV) receiver connected ... comprising ... microprocessor coupled to the plurality of slave devices for repeatedly sending status request signals to the plurality of slave devices and

receiving one or more response signals from each of the plurality of slave devices," "wherein the microprocessor extracts data from the operation history database when a history inquiry request is received from a user" and "wherein the operation status data includes data related to specific functions performed by the plurality of slave devices." As amply demonstrate above, the combination of these features are not taught or suggested by Hofrichter and Aizu. Also, Hofrichter and Aizu cannot properly be combined.

In addition, contrary to the Examiner's allegation, Hofrichter cannot teach or suggest that the TV receiver can be used as recited. More specifically, the Examiner alleges Hofrichter discloses using a TV as a controlling device. Hofrichter clearly indicates the requirements of a controlling device. Hofrichter states "the controlling device <u>must</u> be able to access a particular application having instructions excutable by the controlling for controlling a particular controlled device." *Emphasis added; see Hofrichter, page 2, lines 24-27.* Hofrichter only indicates that a personal computer can serve as the controlling device. There is no teaching or suggestion that a TV receiver can serve as the controlling device.

For at least the reasons stated above, independent claim 9 is distinguishable over the combination of Hofrichter and Aizu.

Independent claim 15 recites, in part "constructing an operation history database in a memory by cumulatively storing operation status data of the

plurality of slave devices included in each response signal into the memory," "extracting data from the operation history database when a history inquiry request is received from a user, wherein the extracted operation history data is displayed on a display unit" and "wherein the operation status data includes data related to specific functions performed by the plurality of slave devices." It is clear that independent claim is distinguishable over the combination of Hofrichter and Aizu.

Claims 2-8, 10-14 and 16-26 depend from independent claims 1, 9 and 12 directly or indirectly. Then for at least due to the dependency thereon, these dependent claims are also distinguishable on their own merits. For example, in addition to claim 8, claim 10 also specifies the PLC modem. Also as discussed during the interview, claims 7 and 14 recite that the storing of the operations status data occurs even when the BLOCK function is activated. This feature is not taught or suggested in any of the references.

As another example, claim 21 requires that the response signal from the slave device includes an indication that the slave device is not in operation, i.e. the slave device is idle. Contrary to the Examiner's allegation, the operations history of uses of the devices as disclosed in Hofrichter cannot teach or suggest this feature. The history of uses is just that – a history of uses of the devices – i.e. when the devices are NOT idle.

Aizu cannot correct for this deficiency. As noted above, the operations history information recorded in the File 3 are merely logs of user initiated operations. This has no relevance to whether devices themselves are idle or not. Clearly, the combination of Hofrichter and Aizu cannot teach or suggest the feature as recited in claim 21.

For at least the reasons stated above, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1-26 based on Hofrichter and Aizu be withdrawn.

NEW CLAIMS

Claims 27-30 are added in this Reply. The new claims are distinguishable over the cited references, individually or in any combination for at least due to their dependency on the independent claims. Applicants respectfully request that the new claims be allowed.

CONCLUSION

All objections and rejections raised in the Office Action having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should there be any outstanding matters that need to

be resolved, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Hyung Sohn (Reg. No. 44,346), to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants respectfully petition for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application and the required fee of $1020.00 is attached herewith.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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